THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMED): (a) and (b) In line with the recommendation of the 8th National E-govemance Conference, Department of Information Technology (DIT) has prepared draft guidelines to create an enabling environment with policy interventions and financial support, so that roll out of Common Service Centres, especially in Rural areas can take place at a faster pace. The draft guidelines have been circulated for comments.

In the Union Budget for the year 2005-06, Government has proposed to join Mission 2007—a national initiative launched by an alliance comprising nearly 80 organizations including civil society organizations, with the goal to set up a knowledge Centre in every village by the 60th anniversary of Independence.

So far, no decisions has been taken by the Government to connect one lakh villages through the Common Service Centres.

(c) DIT has been supporting various initiatives to promote usage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for electronic delivery of Government services, for empowerment of citizens, tele-medicine, E-learning etc.

Expansion plan in Il Sector

1726. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons (both professionals and support staff) employed in expanding BPO and IT sector in the year 2004 due to major investment plans and consolidation efforts in these sectors;

(b) the growth targets in terms of investment during 2004; and

(c) how much growth is anticipated during the year 2005 due to the emergence of pro-BPO regime in US elections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMED): (a) BPO and IT Sector employed 8,41,500 persons (both professionals and support staff) during the year 2004.

(b) and (c) In terms of the investments being made, this sector is expected to grow at Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of about 30% and earn total revenue of US$ 20.5 billion during 2004-05, US$ 26.7 billion by 2005-06 and US$ 50 billion by 2007-08.

Recycling of E-waste

1727. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether MAIT (the association of IT hardware makers) has assessed generation of electronic waste worth Rs.7000 crore annually in India;

(b) whether E-waste contains toxic substances like lead, cadmium, mercury and non bio-degradable plastic posing health hazards;

(c) whether more than 60 per cent E-waste collected for recycling in the West and other developing countries is sent to countries in Asia including India where recycling is cheaper; and

(d) if so, Government's comments thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMED): (a) No, Sir. MAIT have informed that they have not conducted any study on generation of E-waste in India.

(b) Yes, Sir. E-waste contains toxic substances like lead, cadmium, mercury in one form or another to varying degrees. The basic body of most electronic equipment is non-biodegradable plastic which also poses environmental hazards.

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(c) and (d) According to some reports, 50% to 80% of the E-waste collected in the USA is reported to be exported to the developing countries, mainly in Asia where recycling may be cheaper. The E-waste *perse* is not hazardous and may not directly pose any immediate environmental risk. It is the rudimentary and crude recycling methods to recover the precious metals from this waste adopted by the people involved in this business that poses an environmental threat.